

In the claims:

For the Examiner's convenience, all pending claims are presented below with changes shown in accordance with the mandatory amendment format.

1. – 12. (Cancelled)

13. (Currently Amended) A method for load balancing among a plurality of servers in a server bank comprising:

receiving a data packet at a packet forwarding device to be forwarded to one of the plurality of servers in the server bank;

performing a hash function using one or more identifiers for the data packet to generate a hash value;

~~obtaining searching a server bank table for~~ an address of one of the plurality of servers in the server bank from a server bank table by using the generated hash value as an index value for the address, wherein the server bank table includes an address of each server of the plurality of servers and an index value associated with each address; and

forwarding the data packet to the server in the server bank using the address found in the server bank table.

14. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 13, wherein performing a hash function using one or more identifiers for the data packet comprises performing a hash function using the data packet's Internet Protocol (IP) source address.

15. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 13, wherein performing a hash function using one or more identifiers for the data packet comprises performing a hash function using the data packet's Internet Protocol (IP) destination address.

16. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 13, wherein performing a hash function using one or more identifiers for the data packet comprises performing a hash function using the data packet's Transmission Control Protocol (TCP) source port number.

17. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 13, wherein performing a hash function using one or more identifiers for the data packet comprises performing a hash function using the data packet's Transmission Control Protocol (TCP) destination port number.

18. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 13, wherein searching a server bank table for an address of one of the plurality of servers in the server bank comprises searching a server bank table for an Internet Protocol (IP) address of one of the plurality of servers in the server bank.

19. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 13, wherein searching a server bank table for an address of one of the plurality of servers in the server bank comprises searching a server bank table for a Media Access Control (MAC) address of one of the plurality of servers in the server bank.

20. (Currently Amended) An article of manufacture comprising:

a machine accessible medium including content that when accessed by a machine causes the machine to perform operations comprising:

receiving a data packet at a packet forwarding device to be forwarded to one of the plurality of servers in the server bank;

performing a hash function using one or more identifiers for the data packet to generate a hash value;

~~obtaining searching a server bank table~~ for an address of one of the plurality of servers in the server bank from a server bank table by using the generated hash value as an index value for the address, wherein the server bank table includes an address of each server of the plurality of servers and an index value associated with each address; and

forwarding the data packet to the server in the server bank using the address found in the server bank table.

21. (Currently Amended) The article of manufacture of claim 20, wherein ~~a machine accessible medium including content that when accessed by a machine causes the machine to perform operations comprising~~ performing a hash function using one or more identifiers for the data packet to generate a hash value comprises ~~a machine accessible medium comprising content that when accessed by a machine causes the machine to perform operations comprising~~ performing a hash function using the data packet's Internet Protocol (IP) source address.

22. (Currently Amended) The article of manufacture of claim 20, wherein ~~a machine accessible medium including content that when accessed by a machine causes the machine to perform operations comprising~~ performing a hash function using one or more identifiers for the data packet to generate a hash value comprises ~~a machine accessible medium comprising content that when accessed by a machine causes the machine to perform operations comprising~~ performing a hash function using the data packet's Internet Protocol (IP) destination address.

23. (Currently Amended) The article of manufacture of claim 20, wherein ~~a machine accessible medium including content that when accessed by a machine causes the machine to perform operations comprising~~ performing a hash function using one or more identifiers for the data packet to generate a hash value comprises ~~a machine accessible medium comprising content that when accessed by a machine causes the machine to perform operations comprising~~ performing a hash function using the data packet's Transmission Control Protocol (TCP) source port number.

24. (Currently Amended) The article of manufacture of claim 20, wherein ~~a machine accessible medium including content that when accessed by a machine causes the machine to perform operations comprising~~ performing a hash function using one or more identifiers for the data packet to generate a hash value comprises ~~a machine accessible medium comprising content that when accessed by a machine causes the machine to perform operations comprising~~ performing a hash function using the data packet's Transmission Control Protocol (TCP) destination port number.

25. (Currently Amended) The article of manufacture of claim 20, wherein ~~a machine accessible medium including content that when accessed by a machine causes the machine to perform operations comprising~~ searching a server bank table for an address of one of the plurality of servers in the server bank comprises ~~a machine accessible medium comprising content that when accessed by a machine causes the machine to perform operations comprising~~ searching a server bank table for an Internet Protocol (IP) address of one of the plurality of servers in the server bank.

26. (Currently Amended) The article of manufacture of claim 20, wherein ~~a machine accessible medium including content that when accessed by a machine causes the machine to perform operations comprising~~ searching a server bank table for an address of one of the plurality of servers in the server bank comprises ~~a machine accessible medium comprising content that when accessed by a machine causes the machine to perform operations comprising~~ searching a server bank table for a Media Access Control (MAC) address of one of the plurality of servers in the server bank.